

OUR PERIL IN THE EAST

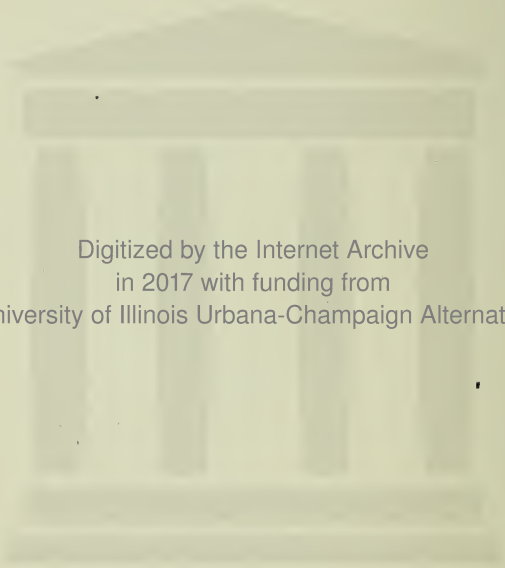
Resolutions of the War Committee *of*

The Union League Club of Chicago

setting forth the menace to the safety of the United States which lies in the consolidation by the Central Powers of their conquests in the East, and urging the vital necessity of a peace which not only forces the liberation of the Slavic peoples now held under the German and Austrian yoke, but provides for their establishment as independent states which will forever block the pan-German program for world domination,

and

Editorial comments thereon by leading newspapers of the City of Chicago.



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Resolutions

ADOPTED AUG. 8, 1918 BY THE WAR COMMITTEE OF
THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB OF CHICAGO:

Recalling that—

The world war was begun by the Central Powers largely because of their ambition for conquest in the Near East, and

Realizing that—

The Central Powers, by the conquests thus far achieved in Russia, Roumania and Serbia have practically doubled their area and population, and

Recognizing that—

If the Central Powers are allowed to keep and develop these conquests they will organize a military despotism which will menace the security of the United States and all freedom loving nations, the War Committee of the Union League Club of Chicago therefore,

Resolves—

That it hereby puts itself on record as against any treaty of peace which does not force the Central Powers to release the territories they have gained by conquest and intrigue in the Near East, and further urges that no peace should be regarded as satisfactory to the Government of the United States and its associates in the war which does not fulfill the just aspirations of the smaller national groups long held against their will under the domination of the Central Powers, and be it further

Resolved—

That the War Committee of the Union League Club of Chicago hereby directs its Editorial Committee to begin at once the prep-

aration and dissemination of material to inform the public and crystalize opinion in favor of the recent official pronouncements to this effect of our Government and of the Versailles conference of representatives of the Allied Nations.

Significant Resolutions

Evening Post, Tuesday, August 13th, 1918

The war activities committee of the Union League Club has adopted resolutions demanding the liberation of Austria-Hungary's subject peoples and the restoration of all territory taken by the central empires in eastern Europe.

The Union League Club has developed into one of the most helpful and intelligent propaganda agencies in the country since its war committee entered the field of public education and inspiration. It has led in a clear-visioned and broad understanding of the issues involved in the great struggle, and has done invaluable work in promoting an informed sentiment for the prosecution of the war to complete victory.

It is significant of the progress of opinion that it should now speak so emphatically for the emancipation of Europe from the Prussian yoke and that it should recognize the fundamental importance of dismembering the German-Magyar monstrosity that, under the Hapsburgs, serves the will of the Hohenzollerns. The Post has been insistent in urging that the Prussian menace to

world peace and security can be ended finally only if Berlin's vassal ally is disintegrated and the Slavic, Roumanian and Italian national groups liberated from alien oppression. With this achievement must go the removal of Prussia's strangling fingers from the throats of Russia, the Baltic States, Poland and the Balkans.

The Union League Club in espousing this program will be of immense service. It is vital that Americans should understand the danger of a compromise peace and the necessity for maintaining the war until the enemy is deprived of all spoils and all power.

America's Interest in Middle Europe

Chicago Tribune, Thursday, August 15th, 1918

The recognition by Great Britain of the Czecho-Slovaks as an allied nation has been well won by the Bohemians. We hope the United States will take similar action.

At the beginning of the world war if any one had asked that the United States enter into a struggle to free Poland, Bohemia, or Jugo-Slavia from Austrian domination, the reply would have been a prompt if not profane negative. The thought that American boys should be asked to fight and die in Europe to win political advantage for peoples of central Europe would have been intolerable.

That thought is intolerable now. The sacrifice of American lives on such issues might be called altruism, but it would be a political crime. Polish and Bohemian patriots would not ask the vicarious sacrifice.

Nevertheless, American soldiers are fighting for the freedom of the Poles, and Czecho-Slovaks, and the Slavs of Serbia and southern Austria-Hungary, and practical statesmanship approves.

We see more clearly than we did in 1914 the real significance of the European conflict and we realize that America is substantially and directly involved in the establishment of a condition after the war which shall insure a durable peace and the removal of a threat to our welfare and security.

What is our interest in the establishment of free Polish, Bohemian, Jugo-Slav nations? It is our interest in breaking the spine of that gigantic imperial enterprise which the pan-German militarism hoped to erect with the sword of conquest and cement with the blood of the weak. A free Poland, Bohemia, and Jugo-Slavia will make a bulwark of freedom across Mittel-Europa, and with the passing of that grandiose dream of Prussian domination, the free peoples of western Europe will breathe again and we may look forward to international relations regulated by our common ideals of peaceful progress.

America is vitally interested in procuring a peace that will be guaranteed by peaceful nations and guaranteed against the threat of imperialist militarism. We are vitally interested in setting up the counterpoise of independent peoples against

that peril until the German people have thrown off the moral and physical control of the military-aristocratic caste and the influence of the imperialist idea of their destiny.

The resolutions of the war committee of the Union League Club in favor of recognizing the aspirations of these heroic peoples seem to us timely and founded on a true perception of the American interest in central European conditions of peace. There are, of course, idealistic considerations which would incline us to favor freedom for all oppressed and aspiring peoples. But certainly no civilian safely at home has a moral right to ask other men to die for his ideal conceptions. In the question of Polish and Slavic independence, however, our sympathy for the cause of freedom runs parallel to our practical interest. America is fighting for a secure peace for herself as well as for her pacific allies.

The Czecho-Slovak Nation

Evening Post, Thursday, August 15th, 1918

The Czecho-Slovak nation has come into being with the recognition of Great Britain, France and Italy and the sympathy of the United States. It has organized itself under a national council and it is represented by three well-equipped armies fighting for the cause of democracy on three fronts.

Its people no longer profess allegiance to the Hapsburgs. The yoke of Austria has been thrown off in purpose and they are the open enemy of the dual monarchy and Germany. Their territory is still under control of the oppressor, but they are in revolt, and only martial law maintains the semblance of Vienna's authority in Bohemia and Moravia.

Thus the disintegration of Austria-Hungary has begun and the allied countries are of one mind in the determination that it shall be carried on until the political patchwork that has served so well the ambitions of predatory monarchs is destroyed.

The achievement of this end, made just by every consideration of the rights of subjugated

peoples and the ideals of freedom and democracy for which we are fighting, means the death blow to the pan-German conspiracy. It will deprive Prussia of her most useful agent, her essential instrument for control of the Balkans and the highway to Bagdad. It will dissipate the dream of a middle Europe. It is as necessary to a complete victory over the Potsdam plotters against world peace as the defeat of the kaiser's armies in France and Flanders.

A glance at the map will show what strategic importance attaches to the territory of the Czecho-Slovaks. The mountain land of Bohemia is like a clinched fist thrust into the ribs of Germany. It will smash the schemes of Prussia for a consolidation of weaker states if it passes into the control of a people who do not recognize the authority of Berlin. It will carry with it the Slavic territory to the east and will be a beacon light of freedom and revolt for the people of Poland and the people of southern Slavdom.

The United States has yet to bring itself abreast of the overseas democracies in its attitude toward the Czecho-Slovak nation. The expression of American sympathy, recently given by our

State Department, should be followed by full recognition of the national council as "trustee for the future government." We cannot afford to be less bold and definite in declaring ourselves on this issue. No further reason exists for considering the feelings of Vienna. No hope remains of making a separate peace with the dual monarchy that will not be a peace in the interests of Germany. There is no excuse for avoiding any step that will hasten the downfall of the Hapsburgs. We owe it to the large element in our population of Czecho-Slovak origin, as an element that has been loyal in word and deed from the first hour when we entered the war, to lend every aid possible to their blood-kin in Europe in the heroic struggle for emancipation that they are making.

Bohemian Independence

Chicago Journal, Thursday, August 15th, 1918

Three powers now have recognized the Czecho-Slovak nation as a formal and independent ally. France took the lead in this work, as she generally takes the lead in anything requiring clear-headed logic. Italy followed. Now Britain has adopted the same course in very generous fashion.

To these three powers should be joined a fourth, the United States of America; and the quicker our recognition of Bohemian independence comes, the better alike for our prestige and our policy.

If blood be the price of liberty, the Czecho-Slovaks have paid in full. Within the last twenty-four hours, dispatches have been smuggled out of Bohemia telling of the summary execution of seventy-four Czech soldiers, the arrest of hundreds of civilians and the reinforcement of the German and Magyar garrisons. Yet this is merely the last drop in the gory bucket, for tens of thousands of Czechs and Slovaks have been hanged, shot or starved to death in prison since the war began.

If services to freedom be the price, the Czecho-Slovaks have an even clearer title to liberty.

Gagged and bound though they were, their struggles have wrecked the whole Hapsburg empire, which is held together now solely by German domination. They have whipped German and Austro-Hungarian armies in fair fight. They are battling now on the western front in France. They are rendering valued aid to Italy. They are the chief force that is rescuing Russia from the mixture of bolshevism and kaiserism, and their career in that country is an epic the like of which never has been seen before.

There is an even stronger reason for recognizing Bohemian independence. That independence is necessary for the throttling of Prussianism. Pore over the map as you will, you can not figure out a free Europe without a free Bohemia. That mountain rimmed tableland in the heart of the continent is the keystone of the arch of central and eastern European liberties; and while it is ruled from Berlin or Vienna, a new bid for the Pan-German empire of middle Europe will be an ever present threat.

Bohemia must have her freedom because she wants it, because she has earned it, and because that freedom is necessary to our own safety. Why should we delay in giving formal official recognition to these plain facts?

